

“Fiesta Flight Plan” Mentor / Mentee Program

Mentee Guidelines & Expectations

Program Purpose

The “Fiesta Flight Plan” Mentor/Mentee Program is designed to help new and returning Balloon Fiesta pilots feel prepared, confident, and informed by pairing them with experienced pilots who understand Fiesta operations and culture.

Your mentor is a resource, not a decision-maker, and is there to help you learn, not to fly Fiesta *for* you.

Your Role as a Mentee

As a Mentee, you are encouraged to:

- Ask questions
- Seek guidance
- Learn from experience
- Make your own informed decisions

You remain fully responsible for your balloon, crew, and operational decisions.

Support & Communication

- Your Mentor is your first line of support for general guidance and shared experience
 - The Program Liaison is available to:
 - Clarify program expectations
 - Help direct questions to the right Fiesta department
 - Assist if issues arise within the mentor/mentee relationship
 - Official approvals, exceptions, or safety decisions must always come from Balloon Fiesta staff
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Key Learning Areas

Fiesta Logistics

- Launch site preferences and trade-offs
 - Different launch area considerations
 - Crowd levels, wind patterns, restroom locations
 - Distance to Pilot Briefing
- Morning crew pickup planning
- Traffic flow and timing
- Breakfast options and navigating the SID
 - Why visiting the SID can be valuable even if you don't eat

Launch Field & Safety

- Launch square etiquette
- What to expect from Zebras, Safety, and field staff
- Respectful coordination with neighboring pilots
- Importance of patience on marginal weather days

Public Interaction & Conduct

- Drive respectfully, avoid honking
- Always thank volunteers, Zebras, and traffic staff
- Understand your role as an ambassador of the sport
- Learn how to engage the public positively and safely

Fiesta Culture

- Participation in Landowner Relations
 - Ambassador of the Day
 - Continuing education opportunities such as Ground Schools and Safety Seminars
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Professional Expectations

Mentees are expected to:

- Follow all Balloon Fiesta policies, procedures, and safety requirements
 - Treat mentors, staff, volunteers, and fellow pilots with respect
 - Communicate openly and professionally
 - Raise safety concerns immediately
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Mentee Acknowledgment

By participating as a Mentee, you acknowledge that:

- Your mentor provides guidance and experience, not authority
- You are responsible for all operational decisions
- Official Balloon Fiesta staff retain all decision-making authority